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ARGENTINA CHAMP DONA BRUJA WINS U.S. DEBUT IN GRADE III OLD FORESTER MINT JULEP 'CAP AT CHURCHILL DOWNS

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Saturday, June 10, 2017) – Dom Felipe LLC's Argentina invader **Dona Bruja (ARG)** ran down pacesetter and 3-5 favorite **Believe in Bertie** in deep stretch to win Saturday's 41st running of the \$100,000 Old Forester Mint Julep Handicap (GIII) at Churchill Downs by 1 ½ lengths.

The Old Forester Mint Julep Handicap was the first start in the U.S. for the Group 1-winning 5-year-old mare, who improved her record to nine wins in 11 starts. In her final start in her native country on Dec. 8, Dona Bruja (ARG) triumphed against open company in the \$128,135 Copa de Plata Roberto Vasquez Mansilla Internacional (GI) over 1 ¼ miles on turf at San Isidro.

The classy Argentine champion backed up to 1 1/16 miles on turf for her stateside debut with trainer **Ignacio Correas IV** and defeated five rivals while clocking 1:41.46. **Declan Cannon** rode the winner to collect his first graded stakes win.

Dona Bruja (ARG) – which translates in English to “Dona the Witch” – chased the pace set by Believe in Bertie, who clipped off quarter-mile fractions of :23.58, :46.65 and 1:10.26 – the fastest half-mile and six furlongs in the history of the race. Dona Bruja (ARG) raced along the inside, shifted out as they entered the stretch and drew even with Believe in Bertie with a furlong to run before driving past the leader in the final stages.

“Ever since I watched her races I was so excited to bring her to America,” Correas said. “The turf courses are different here than in Argentina but she handled everything great. Declan rode her very well. He was very patient and rode exactly to instruction.”

Dona Bruja (ARG), who carried 119 pounds, returned \$13.40, \$4.20 and \$3.40 as the 5-1 third betting choice. Believe in Bertie, who was the 122-pound starting high weight under **Shaun Bridgmohan**, paid \$2.20 and \$2.10. **Sky My Sky**, at 116 pounds with **Sophie Doyle** in the irons, finished another 5 ¼ lengths back in third and paid \$3.40.

Linda, Lots o' Lex and **Dynazar** completed the order of finish. **Majestic Angel** was scratched.

Dona Bruja (ARG) banked the \$61,380 first prize for her fourth win in a row and her fifth career stakes victory. Her earnings jumped to \$280,768 from a record of 11-9-2-0.

“I'd love to run her in the Grade I, \$750,000 Beverly D. next (at Arlington Park on Aug. 12),” Correas said.

Dona Bruja (ARG) is a daughter of Storm Embrujado (ARG) out of the Nureyev mare This Is Crazy (AUS) and was bred in Argentina by her owner **Ivan Gasparotto**, who races under the nom de course Dom Felipe LLC.

Racing at Churchill Downs resumes Sunday with a 10-race program that begins at 12:45 p.m. EDT. There is a \$62,762 carryover in the Single-6 Jackpot, which covers Races 5-10.

OLD FORESTER MINT JULEP HANDICAP QUOTES

DECLAN CANNON, jockey of DONA BRUJA (ARG) (winner): “Ignacio (Correas) told me to ride her with a lot of confidence. I watched a lot of her races internationally and she did everything so easily. I think she has a very bright future. I just sat back of the speed and when I asked for her run she had a lot of energy reserved and finished incredibly well.”

IGNACIO CORREAS IV, trainer of DONA BRUJA (ARG) (winner): “She was bred in Argentina and was a champion over there. Ever since I watched her races I was so excited to bring her to America. The turf courses are different here than in Argentina but she handled everything great. Declan (Cannon) rode her very well. He was very patient and rode exactly to instruction. I'd love to run her in the Grade I, \$750,000 Beverly D. next (on Aug. 12).”